



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 16, 2015

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Senator Tiffany and Representative Craig Statement on Supreme Court Decision on John Doe Investigation

State Senator Tom Tiffany (R-Hazelhurst) and Representative Dave Craig (R-Town of Vernon) released the following statement today following the release of the Wisconsin Supreme Court decision on John Doe:

“Today, the Wisconsin Supreme Court made the right decision in shutting down the John Doe. The investigation which the Supreme Court noted was: “unsupported in either reason or law,” reviewed whether coordination took place between a number of conservative groups and the recall campaign of Governor Walker. From pre-dawn, paramilitary style raids to a sweeping disregard and disdain for target’s First Amendment rights, this investigation was conducted under a cloak of darkness using secrecy and intimidation against witnesses and targets.”

Last February, we introduced Senate Bill 43 (Assembly Bill 68) that maintains John Doe as a tool for prosecutors but adds a number of important safeguards. In light of what was leaked and reported on regarding the John Doe investigations, we felt that the process needed much greater accountability and transparency. Our bill does just that by mirroring the secrecy laws of the Federal Grand Jury, limiting the secrecy orders to the judge, law enforcement, prosecutors and court staff. Our bill puts a 6-month time limit on the proceeding which can be extended in unlimited 6-month increments by a vote of a majority (6 of 10) of the chief judges in the ten judicial administrative districts in the state. A majority vote of these chief judges is also required to expand the scope of the proceeding. We ensure that records reflecting the cost of John Doe proceeding are publicly available, limit the circumstances under which a judge can appoint a special prosecutor and require notice be given to return property. We are extremely pleased that the Supreme Court’s ruling demands the return of all seized property. We find it reprehensible that personal property unrelated to the investigation, including that of minor children, was seized.

We renew our call on legislative leaders to immediately schedule Senate Bill 43 and Assembly Bill 68 when the Legislature convenes its fall session. While justice may have been served at long last on those unnamed petitioners in today's ruling, unfortunately there are several others who do not have the means and the opportunity to pursue a rigorous defense when battling similar circumstances. Finally, we are committed to unearthing the motivation behind these investigations and look forward to working with our legislative colleagues to ensure all Wisconsinites know the full details behind this unlawful dragnet. ”